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## China, Peoples Republic of

## Livestock and Products

# China's Outbreak of Streptococcus suis in Swine 2005

**Approved by:**

Maurice House

U.S. Embassy Beijing, Office of Agricultural Affairs

**Prepared by:**

Casey Bean/Zhang Jianping

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**Report Highlights:**

On July 25, 2005, Chinese officials confirmed an outbreak of Streptococcus suis in pigs in Sichuan Province. The outbreak has also resulted in 214 human infections and 39 deaths since June 24. China notified the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) of the outbreaks. Thus far, the disease has not significantly impacted swine production in other provinces, but in some areas pork consumption is showing signs of a decline. On July 28, China suspended frozen pork exports to Hong Kong. Since Hong Kong accounts for one-third of China's total pork exports, exports in 2005 may drop unless other provinces fill the pork supply shortfall.

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A pig-borne bacterial disease, *Streptococcus suis*, has spread to towns in Sichuan Province, killing 39 people and sickening 214, according to media reports from the Ministry of Health. As of August 7, 101 infected people were hospitalized in Sichuan, including 10 seriously ill. All the victims were farmers who slaughtered infected pigs or those who processed or handled the pork and ate it. The health ministry issued a national guideline ordering farmers to bury infected pigs deep in the ground or to burn them. According to the Ministry of Health and the Sichuan Provincial Health Bureau, the disease has spread to 32 counties and 10 cities since June 24. The Minister of Agriculture reported that 644 head of pigs died of *Streptococcus suis* up until August 4.

This week Chinese authorities announced the disease is under control, and the Ministry of Health will also stop daily updates of the disease situation. Local governments will be responsible for reporting additional cases to the public.

Although the disease has not significantly impacted swine production in China's other provinces, pork consumption in some areas, particularly Sichuan, has fallen. Other provinces have banned Sichuan-originated pork and have imposed strict checks on pork from surrounding provinces.

Hong Kong is China's main pork export market, accounting for one-third of its total exports. The Chinese Government voluntarily suspended Sichuan's frozen pork exports to Hong Kong (see ATO Hong Kong's voluntary report HK5023). If other provinces cannot fill the pork supply gap, China's total pork exports during 2005 may drop.

*Streptococcus suis* is not an unusual disease in swine, though the rapid infection of humans has surprised health experts. Insufficient management of swine on small-scale, family farms in Sichuan would explain the spread of the bacterium in the swine population. The last outbreak of *Streptococcus* in swine occurred in China in 1998. This incident demonstrates the critical importance of timely, public information and education on destroying sick animals, in addition to the need for proper management of swine.

According to the World Health Organization, the prevention of *Streptococcus suis* infection in humans depends upon control in pig populations, a particular challenge given the wide extent of small-scale, family swine operations in rural China. When an outbreak does occur, the first steps are strict controls on animal movement and slaughtering. The second line of defense is education and awareness of the disease to anyone who prepares and cooks pork. Those with open wounds should wear gloves when handling raw or uncooked pork, and all those who prepare pork should wash their hands and clean their utensils thoroughly after preparation. Adequate cooking is also essential. WHO recommends that pork should be cooked to reach an internal temperature of 70°C, or until the juices are clear rather than pink.

Last week the Ministry of Agriculture officially notified the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) of the outbreaks, including laboratory investigation research in animals. The following is OIE's report based on China's notification.

**The People's Republic of China notifies officially to the OIE an outbreak of *Streptococcus suis* in pigs, including laboratory investigation research in animals**

Recent information of a disease in pigs affecting humans occurring in the Sichuan province in the People's Republic of China has been circulating. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) requested the OIE Delegate to the People's Republic of China to provide detailed information about the nature of the disease in animals. The Delegate today officially

provided the OIE with the investigation results carried out by the Veterinary Services in the affected animals.

According to the report, the date of the first confirmation of the disease was the 25 July 2005. It is confirmed that the outbreak occurred first in pigs in the Sichuan Province in 8 backyard farms.

The National Animal Exotic Center and the Harbin Veterinary Research Institute of the People's Republic of China did the differential diagnosis and excluded Avian Influenza virus and Nipah virus.

As immediate control measures, stamping out, quarantine, screening, movement control inside the country and zoning were undertaken. The use of vaccination may be considered to be further undertaken.

The OIE is in close contact with the Veterinary Authorities of the People's Republic of China and will continue to monitor the situation very closely."

(End of report)